

County News and Views

SEPTEMBER 1998

From the Office of Fifth District Supervisor Jerry Eaves

Chances are that the Year 2000 Challenge will impact you. At first, the Year 2000 crisis was thought to be an Information Technology problem for mainframes and older computers. Now we realize that all software and computers, imagine all of the computers and devices containing embedded programs.

The Year 2000 problems concern the risk of malfunction or failure of systems and equipment, e.g., computers, printers, software, telephone systems, public utilities, and electronic equipment. The Year 2000 problems may arise because most systems and equipment, which contain microprocessors or computer chips, were programmed to recognize only the last two digits of any calendar year. So, when January 1, 2000 occurs, many systems and equipment will recognize the "00" as "1900". Many systems and equipment may malfunction or fail on or near 1/1/00 if not corrected. While it may sound as though only computer systems will be affected this is not the case. Many types of equipment also contain microprocessors and may be affected.

The County of San Bernardino is committed to raising awareness about Year 2000 issues. This commitment includes information sharing with the 15,000 employees working in the county's 48 departments, as well as with cities, school districts and other government entities within its borders. Beyond that, the San Bernardino County Year 2000 project is working with the county's vendors as well as the businesses and industries that employ and serve the county's more than 1.5 million residents. San Bernardino County is also sharing information with neighboring Riverside County.

The work with other Counties involves a best practices approach on the best way to handle challenges and to share information. It is crucial that we don't keep reinventing the wheel, especially when it comes to learning about new tools.

In order to deal with the failure of many vendors to respond to written requests for compliance information, San Bernardino County is following a contingency plan where each department develops a priority list of its top ten vendors. With the list in hand, departmental representatives will visit the vendors to see first hand where they stand on compliance. It's easy to ignore a letter in your in-box, but it's hard to ignore a person knocking on your door.

At a time when major corporations are threatening to stop doing business with non-compliant vendors, San Bernardino County is taking a kinder, gentler approach. Once again, sharing information and working collaboratively is the key.

San Bernardino County has established a collaboration within our regional government – the cities, the schools, the other government entities and the county – in which, as we go forward with purchases we are sharing information about the vendors who are either compliant or non-compliant. Basically we have created a pressure point where both the public and private sectors are working together to achieve success.

San Bernardino County is sponsoring a Regional Government Summit, Y2K 500, on September 25, 1998. The Summit begins with Registration and Continental Breakfast at 8:00 am and concludes at 5:00 pm. The Agenda includes Management and Technical sessions as well as Opening Comments by San Bernardino County Acting CAO, Carol Shearer. The Management and Technical Sessions cover topics such as: Desktop Compliance, Embedded Chips, Contingency Planning, Risk Assessment, Interdependencies, Business Impact and Solutions.

Further information is available from Rebecca Allen at (909) 388-0686.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Y2K 500
Regional Government Summit
September 25, 1998
San Bernardino Hilton
285 East Hospitality Lane
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